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Attorney For Defendant,  
 Milton Joel Varela Arteaga

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
 NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA  
 SAN FRANCISCO DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,	)	NO. 3:23-CR-473-CRB
	)	
v.	)	<b>DEFENDANT'S SENTENCING</b>
	)	<b>MEMORANDUM</b>
MILTON JOEL VARELA ARTEAGA,	)	
	)	
	)	DATE: August 6, 2025
	)	TIME: 10:00 a.m.
Defendant.	)	COURT: The Honorable Charles R. Breyer

Defendant, Milton Joel Varela Arteaga, through his attorney of record, Ramin Naderi, respectfully submits this sentencing memorandum in advance of his sentencing hearing. As set forth below, the defense agrees with the Presentence Investigation Report, and will point out certain information contained in the said report.

**INTRODUCTION:**

On December 13, 2023, a five-count Indictment was filed in the Northern District of California, charging Milton Joel Varela Arteaga a/k/a Axel Arteaga Medina, and Jose Medina Murillo a/k/a Telmo Danilo Gallo Medina, with violations of 21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1) and (b)(1)(C) – Possession with Intent to Distribute a Mixture and Substance Containing Fentanyl (Count One) and 21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1) and (b)(1)(B)(vi) – Possession with Intent to Distribute 40 Grams and More of a Mixture and Substance

DEFENSE SENTENCING MEMO  
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Containing Fentanyl (Counts Two through Five). A forfeiture allegation was also filed pursuant to 21 U.S.C. § 853(a). Arteaga was only charged in Counts Two through Four. On April 23, 2025, Arteaga pled guilty to Counts Two and Three of the Indictment. Judgment and Sentencing are currently set for August 6, 2025, at 10:00 a.m., before the Honorable Charles R. Breyer, Senior United States District Judge. According to the Plea Agreement, which was filed pursuant to Rules 11(c)(1)(A) and 11(c)(1)(B) of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure the defendant and the Government agreed to the following Sentencing Guidelines calculations: Base Offense Level 36 pursuant to USSG §§ 2D1.1(a)(5) and (c)(2), a three-level decrease, pursuant to USSG §3E1.1, for Acceptance of Responsibility, and a two-level decrease, pursuant to USSG §4C1.1. for Zero-Point Offender, resulting in an Adjusted Offense Level 31. The parties agreed to an expanded search as a condition of supervised release and to forfeiture. The parties have not reached an agreement regarding the defendant's Criminal History Category. The assigned Probation Officer, Ms. Denise Mancina, is in agreement with the proposed guideline calculations as set forth in the Plea Agreement.

#### **PERSONAL AND FAMILY BACKGROUND:**

Mr. Varela Arteaga has had a difficult childhood and life. He was born on June 17, 1996. His father, Rodemiro Varela Matute, was killed by gang members in Honduras. His mother, Ofelia Medina, who resides in Honduras, cleans homes and washes clothing, and they maintain frequent contact. The defendant reported he has one sister: Cindy Vanessa Varela Arteaga, age 27, who resides in Honduras, and they maintain frequent contact. Additionally, he stated he has five half-siblings with whom he does not have any contact and their whereabouts are unknown. He noted his mother and sister are aware of his current legal situation. When his mother found out of his legal situation, she became depressed and ill. The defendant indicated she recently felt like she was going to have a stroke and was given medication. He stated he would send her money when he could.

Mr. Arteaga was raised by his mother and father throughout his childhood. He stated both parents worked, and although they barely made enough money to pay for their monthly rent, they had all their meals, clothes, electricity and water available. Mr. Varela Arteaga helped his parents financially by starting to work at a young age. Throughout his childhood, Mr. Arteaga witnessed domestic abuse. He

1 indicated his father consumed alcohol to excess and would subsequently become violent with his mother  
2 by pushing and shoving her. He noted his parents eventually separated when he was approximately 20  
3 years old due to his father's alcohol and domestic abuse. He noted he also experienced a lot of violence  
4 in his neighborhood. He saw dead bodies and heard of people being kidnapped.

5 Approximately eight years ago, Mr. Arteaga's father was a victim of violence in a massacre after  
6 gang members went around collecting taxes on bus drivers and killed approximately 12 people,  
7 including his father because they did not pay their dues right away. His father lived in an apartment near  
8 the bus yard and Mr. Varela Arteaga was helping his father that day. He recalled his father walked out of  
9 the apartment and he heard gunshots being fired. When he came out of the apartment, he saw his father  
10 laying on the ground suffering from three bullet wounds and immediately went to check if he was  
11 conscious. He recalled a lot of people being around and several bodies laying on the ground. His father  
12 was still alive when the ambulance took him to the nearest hospital; however, he was pronounced dead  
13 at the hospital. Mr. Varela Arteaga had had a good relationship with his father, and has not yet overcome  
14 his loss. He noted he still thinks about his father and feels sad at times.

15 At the Presentence Interview, Mr. Arteaga also reported he first tried alcohol at the age of 24 and  
16 last consumed it prior to his arrest for the instant offense; however, he denied ever having an alcohol  
17 problem. He indicated he first tried cocaine in Honduras at the approximate age of 20 with his friends.  
18 By the age of 21, he became addicted to the drug and used it daily since his arrival in the United States.  
19 Mr. Arteaga stated that upon moving to Oakland and while dealing fentanyl, he became addicted to  
20 being around it while other people used it. He noted he had to be around fentanyl, or he would otherwise  
21 feel sick. He reported he has never taken any substance abuse treatment classes but would be amenable  
22 to taking them as he does not want to go back to his old lifestyle.

23 Mr. Varela Arteaga's educational level is unclear. He repeated the second grade due to having  
24 trouble understanding in school. It is unclear, however, as to whether he graduated high school in  
25 Honduras or only completed the 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

26 Prior to his arrest for the underlying offense, Mr. Arteaga reported he was living with his former  
27 significant other, Gabriela Escorza, on "69th and Bancroft" Streets in Oakland, California. He stated he

1 lived in Oakland for over two years. Previously he resided in Miami, Florida, where he lived for  
2 approximately three years, since 2017, when he first entered the country. He has three children from  
3 prior relationships: Joel Daniel Aguilar Varela, age 6, who resides with his mother, Enis Aguilar, in Los  
4 Angeles, California; Elizandro Caleb Varela, age 9, who resides with his mother, Pamela Erazo, in  
5 Tijuana, Mexico; and Zoe Guadalupe Escorza Varela, age 3, who resides with her mother, Gabriela  
6 Escorza. He stated he does not maintain any contact with his son Joel, minimal contact with Elizandro,  
7 and frequent contact with Zoe. He is not court-ordered to pay child support for any of his children.

8       Unfortunately, Mr. Varela Arteaga's poor decision making led to his involvement in the instant  
9 case. He is remorseful for his involvement, as this type of behavior is out of character for him. He is  
10 prepared to accept responsibility for his actions and understands that there are severe consequences. He  
11 has stated that he believes he would benefit from future counseling services. His hope is that he can  
12 serve his sentence and then get back to those he loves and secure employment in Honduras and live a  
13 stable life.

14 **CONCLUSION:**

15       Mr. Varela Arteaga has pled guilty and is willing to accept full responsibility for his involvement  
16 in this case. He understands he will be sentenced for his role and is willing to accept full responsibility  
17 and the sentence handed down. He understands the gravity of the situation and has vowed not to allow  
18 himself to be in a similar situation again moving forward. The defense respectfully requests the court  
19 consider a lenient sentence followed by three (3) years of supervised release, and the terms and  
20 condition recommended by U.S. Probation.

21  
22 DATED: July 31, 2025

Respectfully Submitted,

23  
24 /s/ Ramin Naderi

25 Ramin Naderi  
26 Attorney for Mr. Milton Arteaga  
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